

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

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INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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USCINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT ET

SUBJ: AFAR SULTAN AND EMAC

REF: ADDIS 12591

1. OCTOBER 23 ETHIOPIAN HERALD CARRIES INTERESTING ARTICLE REPORTING ETHIOPIA TIKDEM SPEECH BY ALI MIRA HANFERE, AFAR SULTAN. SPEECH MADE AT SULTAN'S CAPITAL OF ASSAITA IN AWSSA AREA ON ID AL FITR, VIZ., PRIOR EVENTS REPORTED REFTEL.

2. ARTICLE STATE IN SUBSTANCE THAT ALI MIRA, "THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF THE AFAR TRIBE", EXPRESSED UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR EMAC, WHICH REPRESENTED, AMONG OTHERS, BY MAJOR TEFERRA WOLDE-TENSAE, ACTING CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OF WOLLO, BEFORE OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND THOUSANDS OF LOCAL INHABITANTS. SULTAN SAID HAVE WELCOMED EMAC REPS AND OTHER GUESTS' PRESENCE IN ASSAITA ON OCCASION ID. HE THANKED EMAC REPS FOR EFFORT EXPLAIN ETHIOPIA TIKDEM TO LOCAL POPULACE AND PRAISED ETHIOPIA'S
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PEACEFUL REVOLUTION SPEARHEADED BY ARMED FORCES WHICH, HE SAID,

PUT AN END TO MORE THAN HALF CENTURY OF MISRULE IN ETHIOPIA.
RECALLING SUFFERING OF AFAR UNDER OLD REGIME, HE ACCUSED FORMER
GOVERNMENT OF DELIBERATE NEGLECT OF AFAR INTERESTS AND EDUCATION.

3. MAJOR TEFERRA STRUCK A SIMILAR NOTE. ACCORDING ARTICLE, HE
STATED THAT ANCIEN REGIME TURNED DEAF EAR AND BLIND EYE TO
AFAR HARDSHIPS. HE PRIASED AFARS FOR, NEVERTHELESS, "CLOSING
RANKS AND VIGILANTLY WATCHING COUNTRY'S NORTHERN COAST". AFARS
HAD SUFFERED, BUT THEIR SUFFERING AND THAT OF THEIR PROVINCE (WOLLO)
HAD BEEN ON OF PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS LEADING TO
DOWNFALL OF THE OLD ORDER. TEFERRA PRAISED AFAR SUPPORT FOR
PEACEFUL CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT AND "FOR GOING ABOUT THEIR DAILY
BUSINESS WITHOUT GIVING ANY KATTENTION TO FALSE RUMORS KBEING
SPREAD BY REMNANTS OF FORMER REGIME".

4. UNIDENTIFIED EMAC REP THEN SAID THAT CERTAIN LACKEYS OF
FORMER REGIME TRYING SOW SEEDS OF MISTRUST BETWEEN AFARS AND
EMAC. EMAC REPS HAD COME TO PUT AN END TO THESE UNFOUNDED
SUSPICIONS BY EXPLAINING TRUE AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF EHTIOPIA
TIKDEM. SPEAKER DISCLOSED THAT NEW EPMG "HAD RECEIVED NUMBER
OF UNFAVORABLE REPORTS ABOUT BIT-WODED ALI MIRA, BUT AFTER
CLOSE ASSESSMENT IT WAS ESTABLISHED BEYOND ANY SHADOW OF
DOUBT THAT THESE REPORTS WERE UNKFOUNDED AND THAT BIT-WODED
WAS ONE OF THOSE LOCAL LEADERS WHO DID ALL HE COULD FOR THE
GOOD OF HIS COUNTRYMEN".

5. COMMENT: TENOR AND TIMING OF ARTICLE SUGGESTS EMAC MAY
BE RECONSIDERING ITS EARLIER HARD-LINE APPROACH TO SULTAN.
WE HOPE SO.
WYMAN

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